Tuki Tiki

Grammar guide

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0. Introduction

Background

Tuki Tiki (*cyclical, repetitive, roundabout language*) is a constructed language with very few sounds (8) and words (39). It was derived from another minimalist language, **Toki Pona** (*good language*), by removing sounds, words and constructions from it. All Tuki Tiki words must have source words in Toki Pona (that are commonly used and understood), and no words or sounds can be added, only removed. The exact count has gone down and back up many times, depending on how I felt.

There is no end goal to how small the language is supposed to be. Tuki Tiki is not trying to be a better version of Toki Pona, nor the 'smallest possible language'. In fact, it's pretty tame in comparison to many others (such as: the Toki Pona-inspired Puna & Pulu by arpee (18 words), Jack Eisenmann's Facilish (2 words), arseniiv's U (1)...). Tuki Tiki's 'goal', if you want to call it that, can be summarised as **'Toki Pona but smaller'**: I just tried my best to do something interesting with that premise. Shrinking Toki Pona seemed more fun to me than expanding it, precisely because it's the more restrictive option.

The main areas of difference between Tuki Tiki (TT) and Toki Pona (TP) are sounds and words. The syntax (how words are combined together to eventually create sentences) has changed much less in comparison. If a grammatical property of Toki Pona is missing in Tuki Tiki, that's usually because a word associated with that property was lost (e.g. TP *o*, *pi* have no TT counterparts).

For me, Toki Pona was easier and more fun to learn than other constructed languages (conlangs), which I struggled getting into. Similarly, Tuki Tiki started because I struggled to make full-fledged conlangs of my own and found the process frustrating. I created this language between my first exams at university in January 2020, as a way to relax and to think about what a language needs to (barely) function. It's a weird hobby that's helped me through stressful periods. I don't think you'll find it very useful, but I hope you'll find it fun.

Sounds and letters

Tuki Tiki is a repetitive language, both in speech and in writing. It uses 8 letters of the Latin alphabet, reserving uppercase for the start of names like Toki Pona does. 3 of the letters stand for vowel sounds (*a, i, u*) and 5 stand for consonant sounds (*m, l, p, t, k*). A syllable is made up of a consonant followed by a vowel; the consonant is

optional at the start of a word. Words are no longer than two syllables unless they are Names. The word stress is always on the first syllable.

All of Tuki Tiki's letters can be pronounced as they are in Toki Pona, but some have more possible pronunciations (allophones). This is especially true for the consonants written *l* and *t*. In both cases, the front part of the tongue can be put anywhere from the teeth to a little behind the alveolar ridge (anywhere in the 'coronal' area). The two sounds differ not in where you move your tongue, but how you move it.

/l/ may be pronounced like almost any English pronunciation of the letters L or R, so long as the front of the tongue touches the coronal area. It can also be pronounced like the letter N, which it replaced in many Toki Pona words: TP *pona* became TT *pula*. Pronunciations similar to Spanish taps and trills are also possible.

With /t/, the airflow is more obstructed: it can be completely blocked, creating a sound like the letter T in English, or the air can pass through a small constricted opening, creating a sound with some friction like English S, SH, TH...
This second, [s]-like pronunciation is especially likely in these conditions:

- in the second syllable of a word: *muti, kati, titi*;
- before the vowel /i/.

The [t]-like pronunciation is especially likely in these conditions:

- at the start of an utterance or after a pause;
- before the vowel /a/.

Another way of pronouncing Tuki Tiki's /t/ is as an affricate, such as [ts].
Before the vowel sound /i/, /t/ can be pronounced with the tongue a little further back (i.e., closer to the palate).

The below table shows my personal preferences in my own speech. Bright yellow (5) indicates most likely, bright pink (1) least likely. One thing I did not take into account: a word can come at the start of an utterance/after a pause, or it can go after another word. In the latter case I favour the [s]-like pronunciations a little more (e.g. *tuki **t**iki*). You are free to deviate from this.

Table 1: Pronunciations of /t/ in different environments

Pronunciation of /t/		taka	tuki	tila	muti
anterior	[t]	5	5	2	2
	[ts]	3	4	4	3
	[s]	2	3	3	4
posterior	[t̠]	3	4	3	3
	[t̠s̠]	2	3	5	4
	[s̠]	1	2	4	5

1. The basics

Here I will talk about the basics of Tuki Tiki grammar. By the end, hopefully you will be able to make and understand phrases and very simple sentences.

Words and how you put them together

tuki is the word for speech, speaking, talking, language, communicating, and expressing your thoughts. Just like in Toki Pona, you can simply say '*tuki!*' as a way of greeting/beginning a conversation.

tiki has to do with circle-like stuff; especially in a more abstract sense, it lets you describe things that work like cycles, that are continuous or repeating. Perhaps you could say '*tiki?*' to ask someone to repeat what they just said, with a meaning close to 'again'.

The 'standard' name of this language is simply these two words put together.

(1)a *tuki tiki*
repetitive speech, repeating language, speak repetitively, say again; circumlocution...

When we put words together in this way, it's always the first word that is considered the **head**, while every next word is a **modifier** of it. Here, *tuki* is the head and *tiki* is modifying it: the speech is circular or repetitive.

This abstract blueprint of **head+modifier(s)** lets us create many expressions. We can use a word without modifiers (1a), or we can give more details by modifying it (1b-d).

(1)a *ka*
a creature, the living being, creatures, the creatures...

(1)b *ka li*
this creature, this living being, these creatures...

(1)c *iku mi*
my thing, my stuff, our thing, our stuff...

(1)d *ka muku mi*
my food-person, my sweet person...

Each word is stressed on the first syllable. In a longer phrase, the stress is often heaviest on the second word: *ka li, iku mi, ka muku mi*. When a phrase has more than one modifier, the stress can vary.

Simple sentences

The simplest **sentence** in Tuki Tiki has two things in it. The first thing acts as the subject, and can only be one of three words: *mi*, *tila*, or *li*. The second thing is an expression (either a word or a phrase) that acts as the verb/predicate.

(2)a *mi tuki.*
I talk. / We talk.

(2)b *tila tuki.*
You talk.

(2)c *li tuki.*
[This/that/he/she/it] talks. / They talk.

(2)d *mi tuki tiki.*
I speak in circles, repetitively...

mi is the word that refers to the speaker: think of it like English 'I' and 'me', but also like 'we' and 'us'. A group the speaker belongs to can also be *mi*. *tila* is the word that refers to the addressee (the listener, spoken-to person) like English 'you' (both 'thou' and 'y'all').

The word *li* can do a lot of things in Tuki Tiki. We already saw it in example (1b). There are multiple ways to represent *li* in English, notably demonstratives (*this, that*; TP *ni*) and third-person pronouns (*he, she, they, it*; TP *ona*).

Words mean many things

Parts of speech are very fuzzy in Tuki Tiki: most words could be thought of as nouns in one context, or as verbs in another. A word is interpreted as a verb if it appears in the right place. Thus, *tuki* can be translated as 'speech/language' or as 'speak/talk': in (2), it behaves more like an English verb because it goes after the word that behaves like the subject of the sentence. Sometimes, a word in the verb-y spot can still be interpreted in a number of ways. We will look at *muku* as an example.

The word *muku* can be about eating, food, tastiness, sweetness, and things or people that are food-like by being pleasant or sweet in a metaphorical sense. In (3), I show a couple of possible translations of the sentence *tila muku*.

(3) *tila muku.*
You are sweet.
You are tasty. (?)
You are food. (?!)
You eat.

Presented in this way, the amount of interpretations can seem overwhelming or hard to deal with. While you'll encounter this more in Tuki Tiki than in Toki Pona, the problem still looks worse than it really is: maybe you could theoretically want to call someone food, but, practically, how often do you need/want to?

The last two translations above are shared between *muku* and its TP source word *moku*. The remaining English translations, 'sweet' and 'tasty', have nothing to do with this ambiguity, but are due to *muku*'s expansion into other meanings. To a Tuki Tiki speaker, food, tastiness, and sweetness are one single idea, too broad to be captured by any one English word. In a way, you *are* calling someone food when you call them sweet, or you're at least comparing them to food (like *sweet as honey*). Tuki Tiki takes common associations like this and turns them up a notch.

In § 4, we will learn about adding objects to a sentence. When that happens, the amount of possible readings shrinks: when you eat, you always eat *something*.

Translation exercise:

1. *mi ka.*
[redacted]
2. That's him.
[redacted]
3. your food
[redacted]
4. this cute language
[redacted]

Note: Many words in the language are so schematic that any one English (or TP) translation could never really capture all possible interpretations. This means that I can't list all possible 'correct' responses for 1: there are infinitely many.

2. The subject

This chapter will expand on the very rudimentary sentences we saw in chapter 1. Specifically, it's about how you can use a subject other than just *mi*, *tila* or *li*.

Growing the sentence

We have seen how to make sentences where the subject is *mi*, *tila* or *li*. The subject simply goes before the verb:

(1)a *mi pula.*
I am good. (I make good.)
We are good. (We make good.)

(1)b *tila pula.*
You are good. (You make good.)

(1)c *li pula.*
That's good. (That makes good.) (etc.)

But try to do this with any other word and it's no longer a complete sentence, just a string of words:

(1)c *ka pula* [not a sentence]
good life-form, good person... ≠ The person is good.

So: *ka pula* is not a sentence, but *mi pula*, *tila pula*, and *li pula* are sentences. To make *ka* the subject of a sentence, we take the sentence with *li* as its subject and add a new, third thing to it:

(2)a *li pula.*
That, this, it, he, she, is good.
They are good.

(2)b *ka li pula.*
The being/person is good.

The word *li* is doing something similar in (2)a and (2)b: when it goes right before the verb, it turns the string of words into a sentence. There's also a difference. In (2a), *li* is referring to anyone or anything else (than the speaker *mi* or listener *tila*), and it's left

up to context to clear up who or what. In (2b), *li* is only there to refer to the expression before it, i.c. *ka*.

In short, a sentence always needs two things in it: one of the words *mi, tila* or *li*; and an expression (of one or more words) that acts like the predicate. After a simple word or phrase, *li* is said to reprise the earlier phrase, because it wasn't allowed to appear just before the predicate. Here are some more examples of such sentences:

(3)a *pali mi li pula.*
My work/creation is good.

(3)b *ka pula li tuki tiki.*
The good person speaks circlewise.

Me, you, and some other third thing

In some cases, though, you can use *mi* or *tila* in a similar way. This happens when the preceding phrase starts with *mi* or *tila:* to point back to the longer subject, the shorter subject 'echoes' the first pronoun. As a head, *mi/tila* can be modified by any word; among the more common modifiers are *tu* and *a.*[1]

(4)a *mi tu mi pula tu.*
The many of us are very good.

(4)b *tila a tila pali.*
All of you work. / Only you work.

(4)c *mi lu tila mi pula.*
Me and you, we are good.

In (4a), *mi tu* is reprised by *mi.* Likewise, in (4b), *tila* echoes *tila tu.* In sentence (4c), two subjects are joined together by the word *lu,* and referred back to by *mi.* I will discuss *lu* in more detail later.

This creates a parallel between the words *mi, tila,* and *li:* each can appear as the subject on its own, and each can point back to a longer phrase. In the latter case, which of them you use depends on who is being described by the subject: is it the speaker (*mi*), the listener (*tila*) or neither of them (*li*)? The reason *li* is the most common

[1] The word *tu* in (4a) tells us that there is a lot (*mi tu*) or a high degree (*pula tu*) of something. The word *a* in (4b) expresses an idea of oneness, which can be wholeness, 'aloneness' or both. All the things that matter or the only things that matter in a given situation can be described with the word *a*. Things can be *a* without being singular: *a* and *tu* need not be opposites.

of the three is simply that you and I are outnumbered by all the things in the world that aren't us.

Table 2: How *mi, tila, li* behave as subjects: used alone or with something else before them

Short subjects	*mi* (me)	*tila* (you)	*li* (neither)
used on its own	***mi*** *pula.*	***tila*** *pula.*	***li*** *pula.*
used to point back	*mi tu* ***mi*** *pula.*	*tila tu* ***tila*** *pula.*	*li tu* ***li*** *pula.* *iku* ***li*** *pula.*

Repeating *li* is unnecessary in **li li pula,* as much as repeating *mi* in **mi mi pula.* However, it's possible for two **reference words** (*mi, tila, li*) to follow each other in certain situations:

(4)d *muku mi li pula.*
My food is good.

(4)e *muku li li pula.*
That food is good. / Their food is good. / ...

(4)f *li li.*
That's that. / This is it. / That's him. / It's this. / This is what it is. / ...

In (4d-e), *mi/li* is modifying *muku.* The next word, *li,* is pointing back to *muku mi/muku li.* Here *li* can follow another reference word: only the first word can tell us whether the short subject is you or me or not. Sentence (4f) has *li* as its subject, followed by *li* as a predicate.

3. The word lu

This section is dedicated to the word *lu*. It plays a very important role in TT grammar as a 'connector', acting rather like a preposition or a conjunction in English.

Used like a preposition

Most commonly, the word *lu* means something like *at, in, on, by...* There are many possible translations; all of them have the value of prepositions. There are no other words that act quite like *lu,* grammatically speaking: it can't really modify or be modified by another word, but always needs such words to follow it. This grouping of *lu* with the word(s) that follow(s) can be called a ***lu* phrase.** Prototypically, *lu* indicates a spatial relation: the thing before *lu* is happening in/on/at the thing after *lu* (1a-b).

(1a) *mi* ***lu kiku kati.***
I am in/at the forest/garden.

(1)b *tila* ***lu lupa mi.***
You are in my room/house/hole/??mouth.

The meaning of *lu* can be moulded by neighbouring words: in (1c), the English translation is *with.* Rather than a location, the thing after *lu* is an *ilu.* When we're talking about eating, an *ilu* is most easily understood as a tool or an instrument, such as a fork. It's hard to eat inside a fork; and though it's easier to eat near or on top of a fork, that would make the fork much less interesting with respect to the act of *muku.* As in any language, some interpretations just make more sense than others.

(1)c *mi muku* ***lu ilu.***
I eat/drink with a tool.

In other contexts, *ilu* could mean very different things. The *ilu* in (1d) is involved in a process of *taka:* a change in place or quality. The interpretation of *lu* changes accordingly.

(1)d *mi taka* ***lu ilu.***
I move using a tool. / I move along a path. / I change in some way. / ...

Considering this, I don't find it weird that *lu* corresponds to so many different English prepositions. What's weird is that almost every word in the language can make you think of several different things; *lu* is a very normal word by Tuki Tiki standards.

When the thing after *lu* is animate, the relation is usually one of accompaniment. This comitative meaning will become important in the next section.

(1)e *mi **lu tila.***
I am at/with you.

Used like a conjunction

Another function of *lu* is to connect two subjects. Although this is distinct from the prepositional use, there is a semantic thread holding them together. The difference between (2a) and (2b) is the position of the *lu* phrase in the sentence: both *and* and *with* are about accompaniment or nearness in some sense.

(2)a *mi **lu tila** mi pali.*
I and you are doing something.

(2)b *mi pali **lu tila.***
I am doing something with you.

To connect predicates together, we don't use *lu;* instead, repeat the short subject before starting a new predicate.

(3)a *mi muku mi lapi.*
I eat and rest.

(3)b *ka a li taka li tuki.*
Everyone was walking and talking.

Notice that (3a-b) could each be broken into two sentences, with very little change in the interpretation:

(3)a' *mi muku. mi lapi.*
I eat. I rest.

(3)b' *ka a li taka. li tuki.*
Everyone was walking. They were talking.

In summary, there are two different strategies for joining similar things together. For two subjects, we use *lu;* for two predicates, we repeat the short subject. Both of these strategies will come up again as we learn about other parts of the sentence.

4. The rest of the clause

This chapter goes over all the things that can appear to the right of the predicate. This includes objects, complex predicates and ‘circumstances’.

The object

We could think of the sentence as a very small story: the predicate says what’s happening (a **process** of some kind), while the subject says who or what is involved in that process (a **participant**). The **grammatical object** adds a second participant (the first being the subject) to the process described in the predicate. The object appears to the right of the predicate, and is announced by the word *i* (from Toki Pona *e*).

(1)a *ka mi li uli.*
My friends want. / My friends have a goal, desire, drive...

(1)a’ *ka mi li uli* ***i muku li.***
My friends want **this/his/... food.**

(1)b *li muku* ***i a.***
They eat everything.

(2) *li uli* ***i li.*** not: *li uli* ***li.*** (means something else)
He wants it.

If you speak Toki Pona, you may know of a convention to use prepositional phrases ‘transitively’ (i.e. as predicates in my terminology). Something analogous to this is (at least theoretically) possible in Tuki Tiki, using the connecting word *lu* (see § 3).

(3)a *mi taka* ***i kiku*** *lu lupa.*
I move **the rock** into the hole.

(3)b *mi lu lupa* ***i kiku.***
I cause **the rock** to be in the hole.

Lastly, you can add more objects by reusing the word *i.* In this respect, *i* resembles *mi/tila/li* as discussed in the last section.

(4) *mi muku* ***i tilu i kiku.***
I consumed liquids and solids. / I drank and ate.

Complex predicates

In English sentences, there can be several verbs in the same predicate. In particular, consider modal verbs like *can, may, want, need, must,* etc.*:* these are often followed by another verb. Tuki Tiki (like Toki Pona) does something similar. In these examples, one could call *uli* and *ki* helping verbs or pre-verbs:

(5)a *mi **uli muku** i (muku) li.*
I **want to eat** that food.

(5)b *ka a li **uli muku.***
Everyone **needs to eat.**

(5)c *ka ala li **uli paka** i iku ka puka.*
Nobody **should mess with** someone else's things.

(5)d *ilu taka li **ki lupa** i kiku tu lu a.*
The vehicle **can contain** many rocks all at once/all on its own.

Notice that *uli* can correspond to a great many English verbs. In comparison, *ki* seems easier to grasp (akin to *can* and *may*). Beside *uli* and *ki,* another word that I use in this way is *upi:* when something *li upi a,* it is either starting to exist or about to exist. Maybe you can think of other words that are easy to understand.

(6)a *ka kati li **upi tuki.***
The crow **started singing.**

(6)b *kiku ka lili li **upi paka.***
The egg **is cracking/about to crack/starting to crack.**

In principle, nothing is stopping you from combining these helping verbs together:

(7)a *mi **upi uli muku.***
I'm **starting to get hungry.**

Circumstances

One more thing you can add to a predicate is a final *lu* phrase. Like prepositions in English, *lu* relates the rest of the clause to a kind of circumstance (where, when, how, why… it happened).

(6)a *mi muku **lu ilu.***
I eat/drink with a tool. (cf. § 3)

(6)b *ka li taka **lu kiku Tilala** li tiki **lu li.***
People went **to the land of Shinar** and stayed (circled, dwelled) **there.**

Like objects, you can use more than one of these per sentence. Just use the word *lu* again:

(7) *mi taka **lu ilu lu lupa.***
I go along a road to the house. / I move with a tool in/at the hole. / ...

5. The word la

In this section, we turn to the very start of the sentence to discuss the functions of *la*. If you are already familiar with *la* from Toki Pona, feel free to skip to § 6: nothing has changed.

A bit of context

The sentences we have seen so far can already communicate a lot of things: starting with a subject, ending with a predicate and the things associated with it. Even before the subject, you may want to add some sort of context: a piece of information that frames what's about to happen in the clause. This context element appears before the subject and is not a participant in the action (like subject or object): it's more like the stage than like an actor. The word *la* connects the context with the clause.

(1)a ***kiku kati la*** *ka lili li lapi.*
In the forest, a little creature is resting.
["stage" = forest / "actor" = little creature / "act" = resting]

(1)b ***upi tulu la*** *mi upi tama.*
At the start of the day, I start too. / At sunrise, I start too.

(1)c ***mi la*** *tilu li li muku ala.*
In my opinion, this water is not tasty.

In (1a-c), the context was always a simple phrase. But it could also take the shape of a whole sentence:

(2)a ***tulu li upi, la*** *mi upi tama.*
When the day starts, I start too. / **When the sun rises,** I rise too.
["stage" = the day starts / "actor" = I / "act" = rise too]

(2)b ***tila uli ala tiki lu li, la*** *tila tuki.*
If you don't want to stick around here, (you) speak.

The context can also be a lu phrase. Often, removing *lu* does not really alter the meaning of the sentence.

(3) ***(lu) upi li la*** *li muku ala i ka.*
For that reason, they do not eat meat.

To coordinate things before *la,* you may use *lu* as with subjects:

(4) ***kati mi lu kati tila*** *la, kati mi li tiku.*
My flower is taller than your flower.

6. Beyond statements

So far, all Tuki Tiki example sentences have been simple declarative statements. This section introduces other kinds of utterances, most notably questions and commands. Based on the range of expected answers, I distinguish two types of questions: open questions (§ 6.1) and closed questions (§ 6.2). Commands and exclamations are discussed in §§ 6.3 and 6.4.

Open questions

For a question with many possible answers, use the word *timi.* Like English wh-words, *timi* acts like a 'fill-in-the-blank' for the next speaker. As a head, it means 'what'.

(3)b *timi li a?*
What exists?

(3)c *tila timi i muku mi?*
What are you doing to my food?

Unlike its English counterparts, *timi* does not like to move around in a sentence:

(3)a *li pali i timi?* not: ~~***timi** li pali i?*~~ ~~*i **timi** li pali?*~~ ~~*i **timi** la li pali?*~~
What does it do? (lit. 'It does what?')

As a modifier, *timi* can mean 'what, which' or 'how'. English words like 'who' can be translated by combining *timi* with other words.

(3)c *iku timi li uli paka i tuki pula?*
What sort of entity wants to mess up a good language?

(3)d *ka timi li muku i tilu mi?*
Who ate my liquid?

(3)e *tila muku i tilu mi lu upi timi?*
Why did you eat my liquid?

(3)f *mi ilu timi i iku li?*
How do I use this thing?

Closed questions

Closed questions have a limited set of answers. If you expect a ‘yes or no’ answer, you can use the word *ala* (not) like this: verb *ala* verb. This construction is retained from Toki Pona.

(1)a *tila* ***pula ala pula?***
Are you **good?**

To respond to such a question, you might say:

(1)b *pula ala.*
(I am) not good. [No.]

(1)c *pula.*
(I am) good. [Yes.]

Another way to ask the same thing: repeat the short subject, then use *timi* as a verb.

(2)a *tila pula* ***tila timi?***
Are you good or what?
(more literally: “Are you good ***(or) are you what?****”)*

(2)b *ka lili li lapi* ***li timi?***
Are the kids resting or what?
(more literally: “Are the kids resting ***(or) are they what?****”)*

The italicised translations in (2) highlight a quirk of Tuki Tiki: there is no word that clearly corresponds to *or* (TP *anu*), just like *and*. In other words, there are no specialised words to coordinate things (we repeat grammar words we already used instead; see previous sections). The difference between *and* and *or* is not present in the words or in the sentence structure. Rather, coordination can be interpreted in an *and*-like way or in an *or*-like way, depending on context.[2]

And-like coordination is more common. *Or*-like coordination only happens in specific circumstances, most notably:

[2] As a natural language example, the Warlpiri word *manu* can be likened to either ‘and’ or ‘or’, depending on the kind of sentence it appears in. For a formal-semantic analysis, see Bowler, Margit. 2015. Conjunction and disjunction in a language without 'and'. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 24. 137-155. Available at https://journals.linguisticsociety.org/proceedings/index.php/SALT/issue/view/54

- in sentences with *timi*
  (3)a *tila pula tila **timi?***
  Are you good **or** what?
- near the modal word *ki* (can, may, maybe)
  (3)b *kati li **ki** tiku li **ki** lili.*
  The plant could be big **or** it could be small.
- in negated sentences (with *ala*)
  (3)d *mi uli **ala** tula i paka tila i paka li.*
  I don't want to know about your mistakes **or** her mistakes.

Try to re-read the translations in (3) while replacing *or* with *and.* To me at least, these sentences sound less natural and don't seem to mean anything very different than their counterparts.

Commands

Many languages have special strategies to express commands. Tuki Tiki does not.

Table 3: Declaratives & imperatives (statements & commands) in English, Toki Pona and Tuki Tiki

Sentence types	declarative	imperative
English	You are not eating me!	Don't eat me!
Toki Pona	sina moku ala e mi!	o moku ala e mi!
Tuki Tiki	tila muku ala i mi!	

To request something in Tuki Tiki, simply state a desired condition or outcome. Note that even in English or Toki Pona, a simple statement can still imply that you want something (i.c. not to be eaten); in other words, a command can look like a statement.

Sentences (5a-d) could have been uttered over dinner in a hypothetical Tuki Tiki household. All roughly correspond to "can you pass me the plant?" (which, in English, could be expressed in even more variations).

(5)a *tila taka i kati lu mi.*
You pass me the plant.

(5)b *uli mi la tila taka i kati lu mi.*
[According to] my desire, you pass me the plant.

(5)c *tila taka i kati lu mi la mi pula.*

If you pass me the plant, I will be happy.

(5)d *mi uli i kati.*
I want the plant.

(5)e *kati!*
Plant!

Exclamations

Single words or phrases can be used on their own (outside of a sentence), like *kati* in (5e). I call these exclamations.[3] In another situation, one might say *kati!* or *kati pula!* while pointing at a pretty flower. Some more examples:

(6)a *tuki!*
Hi! / Speak! / ...

(6)b *tiki!*
Again! / A ball! / ...

(6)c *muku pula!*
Good food! / Eat well! / ...

(6)d *a.*
Ah. / True. / Yeah. / Mhm. / ...

(6)e *a a a!*
Hahaha!

(6)f *taka!*
Move! / Go! / Let's go! / Change! / A movement! / ...

All simple words and phrases can be used as exclamations when appropriate.

[3] As opposed to interjections, a term traditionally used for a part of speech. TT exclamations can be made of multiple words, and aren't really dictionary entries in their own right.

7. Conclusion & other resources

This document was my best attempt to describe Tuki Tiki. I hope you can appreciate, if nothing else, that even tiny languages can let you say many things. Maybe not enough things for world domination (though I haven't actually tried this yet), but enough to talk with other 'minilang' enjoyers out there.

If you're curious to see Tuki Tiki 'in the wild', there are a few places you can go:

- Tuki Tiki texts, translated or inspired by other works
- kiku tuki tiki, the TT Discord server
- r/tukitiki, the TT subreddit
- kati tiki tu lili, the 2023 April Fools edition of *lipu tenpo* (Toki Pona magazine)

Or if you prefer to look for other Toki Pona inspired projects, I'm keeping a list of tokiponidos that has a few hundred languages so far. (If you have a conlang I can add, please suggest it!)

(The old, outdated, not very good grammar can be found here. I think of it as a time capsule in my own thoughts on grammar, not so much as a way to learn TT.)

8. Word list

Table 4: Tuki Tiki word list *(sw = simple word; con = connector; refw = reference word; hv = helping verb)*

Word	PoS	Gist	← TP
a	sw	all, only, exist, true, ah	*a*
ala	sw	no, not, nothing	*ala*
	con	*question marker: verb ala verb*	
i	refw	*direct object*	*e*
iku	sw	thing, substance, object	*ijo*
ilu	sw	tool, use, method, way	*ilo*
ka	sw	being, person, creature, alive	*jan*
kati	sw	plant, non-moving creature, leaf, page	*kasi*
ki	sw/hv	possible, able, maybe, can	*ken*
kiku	sw	rock, hard, earth, ground, land, place	*kiwen*
ku	sw	air, gas, spirit, feeling, vibe, sound	*kon*
la	refw	*context reference*	*la*
lapi	sw	calm, rest, fuzzy, dim, inactive, cold	*lape*
li	sw	this, that; him, her, them, it	*li, ni*
	refw	subject reference: he, she, they, it, that	
lika	sw	line, stick, limb	*linja*
lili	sw	little	*lili*
lu	con	*conjunction, preposition*	*lon*
lupa	sw	hole, box, room, mouth, inside	*lupa*
mi	sw	me, my, us, our	*mi*
	refw	subject reference: I, we	
muku	sw	eat, food, tasty, sweet, pleasant	*moku*
muti	sw	fun, play, culture, art	*musi*
paka	sw	break, destroy, violence, conflict	*pakala*
pali	sw	do, make, creation, structure	*pali*
puka	sw	side, backside, vicinity	*poka*

pula	sw	good	*pona*
taka	sw	move, go, come, change, time	*tawa*
tama	sw	same, similar, also, stay the same	*sama*
tiki	sw	circle, cycle, repeat, pattern, again, time	*sike*
tiku	sw	high, tall, big, important, top, head, sky	*sewi*
tila	sw	you, your	*sina*
	refw	*subject reference: you*	
tilu	sw	water, liquid	*telo*
timi	sw	what?	*seme*
tipi	sw	front, face, vertical surface	*sinpin*
titi	sw	image, symbol, mean, represent	*sitelen*
tu	sw	a lot, much, many, amount, group	*tu*
tuki	sw	language, make noise, talk, think	*toki*
tula	sw	know, feel, learn, knowledge, document	*sona*
tulu	sw	sun, light, warm, colour, energy	*suno*
uli	sw/hv	want, need, force, goal, direction	*wile*
upi	sw/hv	new, fresh, begin, start, cause	*open*